What you should know about the COVID-19 Vaccine:

1. Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe for me to get?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines can help boost your immunity against the virus and can protect others around you. These vaccines have completed the normal process and safety protocols of the U.S. vaccine safety system. Tens of thousands of people were given the vaccines in clinical trial studies. This helped to ensure safety standards and protect those of various ages, races, and ethnicities. That data was given to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine safety and effectiveness. No shortcuts were given to the development and approval processes of these vaccines.

2. Can I get COVID-19 from these vaccines?

No, the vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. That is because they do not include the live virus or any infectious material. It may take your body a few weeks to build immunity after receiving the vaccination. It is possible that you may experience a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This is a sign that your body is building immunity to the virus and this is normal. If you do develop symptoms of COVID-19, you could have been exposed before or right after receiving the vaccine. You should follow guidelines from your local health department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Those who choose to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, will need to take two doses: one for the immune system to recognize the virus and the other to strengthen the immune response. The two doses will be separated by three to four weeks (depending on the vaccine administered) and both doses are needed for ultimate protection.

3. Should I isolate from others in my home if I get a COVID-19 vaccine before them?

No. You will not have to isolate if you receive a COVID-19 vaccine because they do not include the live virus or any infectious material. It is possible that you may experience a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This is a sign that your body is building immunity to the virus and this is normal. If you develop any of the symptoms of COVID-19, you should follow up with a health care provider or a community health clinic and begin isolating away from others.

4. Why do I still need to take COVID-19 precautions, like wearing a mask, after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine?

You will still need to take the regular precautions recommended by your local health department and the CDC. This is to both ensure that the vaccine has time to build immunity in your body and that you continue to protect yourself from risk of getting the virus. No vaccine of any kind is 100% protective. It will still be critically important to follow standard COVID-19 precautions such as mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing even after receiving a vaccine. Everyone looks forward to a return to normal. Vaccination is part of that, but we must remain vigilant until we achieve a high rate of vaccination in the general population. Precautions can only be scaled back when a majority of the community is eventually vaccinated with both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Information is forthcoming and updates will be made to this document. | 12/19/2020

5. Should minorities be skeptical of these vaccines?

No. Minority persons should not be skeptical of these vaccines because they have met all of the federal guidelines needed to approve vaccines. Given the unfortunate history and treatment of minority health, it is understandable that there would be skepticism. Health collaboratives, like the Black Coalition Against COVID, are hoping to inspire minority populations to regain trust in the healthcare system and to sign up for the COVID-19 vaccine.

6. Are pregnant and breastfeeding women able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. There are no theoretical risks for pregnant and breastfeeding women who receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Due to the potential risks caused by the COVID-19 virus, pregnant women should be offered the vaccine. The decision should be between the woman and her health care provider.

7. Will children be receiving a COVID-19 vaccine?

Not at this time. The emergency use authorization (EUA) was only given for children 16 years of age and older for the Pfizer vaccine and 18 years of age and older for the Moderna vaccine. Data collection is ongoing for vaccine safety and effectiveness in children.

8. Is natural immunity from COVID-19 better than immunity from a COVID-19 vaccine?

No. There is short-term antibody protection after someone has had the virus but the duration of the protection is unknown. Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is the best and safest way to boost the immune system.

9. If I have received the flu shot, will I still be able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. These COVID-19 vaccines are perfectly safe to take even if you have already received the vaccine for the seasonal flu. It is recommended that you do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine within 14 days of the flu or any other vaccine.

10. When will the general public receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Currently, the planning for the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine is underway for individuals in a phased system. Those receiving a vaccine, in Phase 1, include frontline health workers, EMS responders, staff and residents at long term care facilities, etc. with the general public expected to receive the vaccine in Phases 3-4. The timing of the distribution to the general public will be announced at a later date by Gov. DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health.